

-16-

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed on July 24, 2007, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. Claims 1-42 are pending in the subject Application.

To expedite prosecution of the subject application to allowance, Applicants encourage the Examiner to call the undersigned Attorney below.

Summary of an Embodiment of the Invention

Prior to discussion of the pending claims, Applicant would like to briefly discuss an illustrative embodiment of the present invention. One embodiment of the present invention, in contrast to conventional approaches, is directed to a novel graphical user interface for managing entities present in a network. For example, in one embodiment, a graphical user interface displays management information associated with one or more selected managed entities along with a corresponding drill down menu. The corresponding drill down menu includes selectable drill down options corresponding to respective drill down functions. Based on selection of a drill down option by a user, a respective drill down function is applied to the management information associated with the one or more selected managed entities. For example, after identifying a selected drill down option chosen from the drill down menu, a processor function associated with the graphical user interface produces a successive drill down view by applying the respective drill down function associated with the selected drill down option to the management information associated with the management view. This technique of drilling down based on selection of one of multiple selectable drill down options enables a network manager to more quickly traverse network management information.

Rejection of Claims

The Examiner has rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grace (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2004/0075680) in view of Richardson (U.S. Patent 6,271,845). Applicants are appreciative of the Examiner's review of pending claim 1 and respectfully request further consideration.

The claimed invention recites:

1. (Original) A method to support displaying management information in a graphical user interface, the method comprising:
 - displaying a management information view that includes management information associated with at least one managed entity in a network;
 - displaying a drill down menu associated with the management information view, the drill down menu including selectable drill down options that correspond to respective drill down functions selectively applied to the management information associated with the at least one managed entity;
 - identifying a selected drill down option chosen from the drill down menu;
 - producing a drill down view by applying the respective drill down function associated with the selected drill down option to the management information associated with the at least one managed entity, the produced drill down view including a presentation of the management information based on the applied respective drill down function; and
 - displaying the drill down view on the graphical user interface.

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 includes a limitation not recited by any of the cited references. For example, claim 1 recites displaying a drill down menu including selectable drill down options that correspond to respective drill down functions selectively applied to the management information associated with the at least one managed entity.

The office action submits that Grace does not teach or suggest such a limitation. However, the office action likens this element of the claimed invention to teachings found in Richardson. The office action further combines teachings of Richardson and Grace to reject claim 1 as being obvious.

Contrary to the assertion in the final office action that Richardson teaches the above claim limitation, Applicants respectfully submit that Richardson does not display multiple selectable drill down options. For example, the office action recites Richardson at column lines 5-13, which reads as follows:

Therefore, according to the present invention, user-configurable group views allow an administrator of the network, upon noticing that an icon is indicative of a critical event having occurred, as reflected in the color, shape, or other such indicator of the icon, to "drill down" via a user interface to the network device or service that is the subject of the critical event and to then view an event or trap message associated with the critical event that is stored as a field of the network device or service effected by the critical event.
(emphasis added)

Applicants respectfully submit that this passage does not teach or suggest displaying a drill down menu including selectable drill down options as in the claimed invention. Instead, this passage merely indicates that a single icon on a display screen can be colored, shaped, etc. to notify a viewer that an event occurred with respect to the resource represented by the icon. Specific details of drilling down to view health information is discussed in Richardson in FIG. 12 and corresponding text at column 11 line 45 to column 12 line 14. Basically, this passage in Richardson indicates that a user can select the highlighted icon to initiate display of a pop-up window 320 populated with health information.

This is not what Applicants claim to be their invention. More specifically, special highlighting of a single icon and enabling viewing of information by clicking on the icon in Richardson is not equivalent or suggestive of the drill down menu and corresponding multiple selectable drill down options as in the claimed invention. The highlighting in Richardson merely indicates to the viewer that a certain event occurred with respect to a resource represented by the icon and that information may be available if a user were to "drill down" by selecting the icon. This is not equivalent to a menu having multiple

selectable drill down options for a given managed entity as in the claimed invention. That is, there are not multiple selectable drill down options associated with the icon in Richardson for selection by a viewer. Instead, in Richardson there is only one selectable option for the highlighted icon (e.g., managed entity). For example, in Richardson, the user can click on only the highlighted icon to drill down to view corresponding health information. There are no other drill down options with respect to a given icon.

Thus, even if Richardson were combined with Grace, the combination of references would not teach or suggest every claim limitation.

Providing a menu of multiple selectable drill down options as recited by the claimed invention is advantageous over the cited prior art and, perhaps more importantly, not taught or suggested by the cited prior art. For example, the claimed technique of enabling a network manager to simultaneously view multiple different drill down options in a drill down menu and select from the drill down options in the menu makes it possible to more quickly pick an appropriate pull-down option and corresponding traverse network management information. The cited prior art is very limiting because the viewer in Richardson only has a single drill down option for a given resource.

Note further that Richardson only has a single set of alarm information (e.g., information in pop-up window 320 of FIG. 12 in Richardson) to display after selection of a highlighted icon. There would be no motivation in Richardson to display multiple different drill down options because there is only a single manageable set of information to display in window 320 when the user clicks in the highlighted icon. Accordingly, Richardson is also not suggestive of the claimed invention because it is not presented with nor does it address the same problem as is solved by the claimed invention.

For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request allowance of claim 1. By virtue of dependency, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-16 are in condition for allowance as well.

Claim 21 includes similar limitations as claim 1 and should be allowable for similar reasons. By virtue of dependency, corresponding dependent claims 22-36 should be in condition for allowance as well.

Claim 17 includes similar limitations as claim 1 and should be allowable for similar reasons. By virtue of dependency, corresponding dependent claims 18-20 should be in condition for allowance as well.

Claim 37 includes similar limitations as claim 1 and should be allowable for similar reasons. By virtue of dependency, corresponding dependent claims 38-40 should be in condition for allowance as well.

Claim 41 should be allowable for similar reasons as discussed above.

Note that each of the dependent claims includes further distinguishing features over the cited prior art. Some of the distinguishing features are discussed below.

Claim 11

Applicants would like to further point out that claim 11 includes further distinguishing language over the cited prior art. For example, claim 11 recites displaying path information in relation to the management information view, the path information including: i) an entry corresponding to a present drill down level view of the displayed management information in the management view, and ii) at least one entry of a previous drill down level view of previously displayed management information.

Contrary to the assertion set forth in the pending office action, passages in Richardson at column 6, lines 4-7 and column 8 lines 17-20 do not teach or suggest the claimed invention. These passages read as follows:

The drill-down the present invention to determine the underlying, root cause of a poor health status need not start at the group view container level of the network hierarchy. If the user of the system is already viewing the network objects of a particular group view or the health characteristics of a particular network object, for instance, the drill-down would commence at that level.

Referring now to FIG. 7, the general methodology 130 of a preferred embodiment of the present invention for proactively determining health status of network objects and user-configurable group views of a windows-based managed network environment is shown. It is noted at the outset of the description of FIG. 7, that not all steps shown therein are necessarily performed in order to determine the root cause of concern; the amount of drill-down that is required is a function of where in the hierarchy of maps and sub-maps the administrator is located when initially alerted to the presence of a network object in poor health.

These passages in Richardson only indicate that the user can view health information. There is no indication whatsoever of displaying path information, especially one including an entry to a current drill down level and a previous drill down level. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of claim 11.

Claim 12

Applicants would like to further point out that claim 12 includes further distinguishing language over the cited prior art. For example, claim 11 recites wherein the at least one entry of the previous drill down level view may be selected by a user to change contents of the management information view back to a corresponding previously displayed management information view.

The office action cites Richardson at column 10, lines 3-6, which reads as follows:

At Block 190, the administrator or other user of the network will select the one or more network objects of the group view having a health problem; this is the next step of the drill-down process. (emphasis added)

The office action also cites Grace at paragraph 0012, 0010, and 0047. Neither Richardson nor Grace recite that a user can select an entry associated with path information displayed on a display screen. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of claim 12.

Claim 13

Applicants would like to further point out that claim 13 includes further distinguishing language over the cited prior art. For example, claim 11 recites highlighting a subset of drill down options in the drill down menu depending on which of the drill down options may be selected by a user to produce a next displayable drill down view.

To reject the claimed invention, the office action cites Richardson at column 8 lines 1-9, which reads as follows:

The user-configurable group views described above allow an administrator of the network, upon noticing that an icon of a user interface of the NNM console is indicative of a critical event having occurred, as reflected in the color, shape, or other such indicator of the icon, to "drill down" to the network device or service (object) that is the subject of the critical event and to then view an event or trap message associated with the critical event that is stored as a field of the network device or service effected by the critical event. (emphasis added)

As mentioned above, the single colored icon in Richardson is not equivalent to multiple drill down options. Additionally, the icon in Richardson is not highlighted or colored depending on which of multiple drill down options can be selected for a particular managed entity. Instead, the icon in Richardson is highlighted or colored depending on whether there is a single window of health information for possible viewing by a user. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of claim 13 as well.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that the pending claims as well as newly added claims are in condition for allowance. A Notice to this affect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after reviewing this Response, that the pending claims are not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the Applicant(s) Representative at the number below.

-24-

If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-3735.

If the enclosed papers or fees are considered incomplete, the Patent Office is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned Attorney at (508) 616-9660, in Westborough, Massachusetts.

Respectfully submitted,

/PPK/

Paul P. Kriz, Esq.
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Registration No.: 45,752
Chapin Intellectual Property Law, LLC
Westborough Office Park
1700 West Park Drive
Westborough, Massachusetts 01581
Telephone: (508) 616-9660
Facsimile: (508) 616-9661
Customer No.: 58408

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